

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the Office Action of March 22, 2004 and provide the following comments.

Claim Amendments

Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1-21 will be pending in the application. Claims 1, 11, 16, 17, and 20 have been amended.

Claim Objections

Claims 20 and 21 were found to be objectionable because of the phrase “an own vehicle” appearing in independent claim 20. This phrase has been amended to “a vehicle” to obviate the objection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 11, 16, and 17 are rejected as indefinite primarily for antecedent basis issues.

Applicants request that these rejections be withdrawn because of the claim amendments.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-5, 8, and 20 are rejected as being anticipated by Yasui (JP 06-341837).

Applicants have carefully considered this rejection, but request that it be withdrawn.

Regarding claim 1, Applicants note that the claimed invention calculates a parallax based on reference and comparison images by calculating a horizontal deviation amount

between these images, whereas Yasui calculates a parallax based on a vanishing point and a symmetric axis of a preceding vehicle within one image.

Further, Applicants note that the present invention as recited in claim 1 calculates a distance to an object based on the parallax and a first parameter while Yasui calculates a distance to an object based on $D = Lf/dl + fr$ ($dl + dr$: a parallax, L : an interval between cameras; f : a focal distance of lens) which would not correspond to the first parameter of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants aver that Yasui fails to disclose all the features of claim 1 or the resulting dependent claims.

Regarding independent claim 20, Applicants assert that Yasui has no disclosure of an established vanishing point and also does not disclose a vanishing point correcting means for correcting the established vanishing point so that the established vanishing point comes close to the vanishing point calculated by the vanishing point calculating means.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action sets forth the following obviousness rejections:

- 1) claims 11-15 and 18 are rejected in view of Yasui;
- 2) claims 6, 9, 10, 16, 19, and 21 are rejected in view of Yasui and Saneyoshi (US 5,410,346); and
- 3) claims 7 and 17 are rejected in view of Yasui, Saneyoshi, and Azuma (US 6,163,337).

Regarding the first rejection, Applicants assert that Yasui fails to disclose amending a parameter of transforming means based on a vanishing point as recited in claim 11. Therefore, the independent claim and resulting dependent claims should not be rejected.

Regarding the second and third rejections, Applicant respectfully assert that these rejections should be withdrawn because the independent claims are allowable in view of the cited prior art.

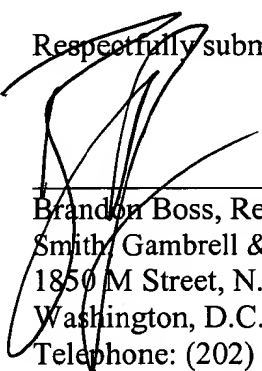
CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300. Any overpayment can be credited to Deposit Account No. 02-4300.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: August 19, 2004

Signature:



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